

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DIVISION OF HEALTH CARE FINANCING
ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO SERIES**

NOTICE: 03-12

DATE: November 20, 2003

DISPOSAL DATE: Ongoing

RE: Food Stamp Management
Evaluation Review (MER)

To: County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators
Tribal Economic Support Directors

From: Mark B. Moody
Administrator
Division of Health Care Financing

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to define the MER process for calendar year 2004.

Introduction

Food Stamp Program regulations (reference federal regulations at 7 CFR 275.5-9) establish local agency monitoring criteria to ensure that the Food Stamp Program is administered in accordance with state and federal requirements. The federal Food Stamp oversight agency, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) specifies management evaluation priority areas that are to be emphasized in each year's review. Large agencies (Milwaukee) are reviewed every year. Medium size agencies such as Dane, Rock and LaCrosse are reviewed every other year, while small agencies, such as Florence, Columbia, and Dunn, are reviewed every three years. In addition, each year FNS selects two states for joint site visits. In 2004, FNS staff will join the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) staff on selected MERs in Wisconsin.

CURRENT PROCESS

The DHFS, Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF) has administrative oversight for the Food Stamp and Medicaid Programs. Within DHCF, the Program Evaluation Section (PES) is responsible for coordinating the MER process, including analyzing information and reporting outcomes at the state level.

As in 2003, the MER site visits will again be conducted through DHFS Regional Offices by the Assistant Area Administrators (AAAs.) The AAAs will contact the local agency's MER coordinator to establish a day and time for the site visit. The site reviews require approximately four hours of agency staff time. A letter will be sent following the review to provide findings and notify the agency of any required corrective action.

After data has been analyzed, a summary report will be written by PES staff and distributed to FNS and local agency managers. It will include "Best Practices" and recommendations for improvement in process, policy and/or training. Beginning this year, the final reports for both the Food Stamp MER and the Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control will be available on the Income Maintenance Advisory Committee website. This will make both of them readily accessible to local agencies and interested individuals.

Because DHFS and local agencies are responsible for the administration of both the Food Stamp and Medicaid programs, the MER process in 2003 incorporated both programs in the local agency reviews. With this coming year's local agency monitoring we want to continue to combine review processes for both Medicaid/BadgerCare and Food Stamps. The state and local agencies will minimize any duplication of effort, and appropriately reflect local agency administration of both programs.

If you have questions or concerns about this process, please contact Marilyn Rudd by phone, at (608) 261-8383 or by email at marilyn.rudd@dhfs.state.wi.us.

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